

VZCZCXYZ0000  
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHHK #0894 1371016  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 161016Z MAY 08  
FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4893  
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 2219

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 000894

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/16/2033  
TAGS: CMGT CVIS AMGT AFIN APER PREL HK MC CH  
SUBJECT: MFA COMMISSIONER IN MACAU RESPONDS ON U.S.  
CONSULAR AGENT

REF: A. HONG KONG 0645  
    B. HONG KONG 0171

Classified By: Consul General James B. Cunningham, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs Commissioner to Macau Wan Yongxiang told Consul General Cunningham in a meeting in Macau on May 15 that the notion of a "consular agent" was still new to China, and would require further deliberation and study by Beijing. China was not yet ready to agree to establish a U.S. consular agent in Macau, as the Consul General had proposed in their meeting April 3 (ref A), Commssioner Wan said.

¶2. (C) The CG noted that Macau currently had several "honorary consuls" and asked if Beijing's concerns focused on our use of the term "consular agent/agency" rather than the more common "honorary consul." Commissioner Wan responded that, indeed, Macau had about 13 honorary consuls, though some were resident in Hong Kong and covered both territories. China, said Wan, was not very comfortable with the notion of "honorary consuls" either, as they did not use such a position within their diplomatic system. In all of mainland China there were only about five "honorary consuls," according to Wan. China had inherited the honorary consulships when it recovered Hong Kong and Macau and had let them stay in place; with the exception of the UK's honorary consul, all have been Macau citizens or residents. The Macau SAR government would have to agree to our establishing the consular agent and had "decided in 2003 not to approve any new honorary consul positions," claimed Wan.

¶3. (C) Wan recommended that we continue the discussion directly with the MFA's Bureau of Consular Affairs in Beijing.

¶4. (C) Comment: The 65-year old Wan will be wrapping up his posting in Macau at the end of this month, after which he said he plans to retire. His presentation and body language made it clear that he has had no desire to take on an extraneous "project" in his last weeks in Macau. We think that without the implicit or explicit support of the MFA Commissioner in Macau, there is little point in raising this directly with the MFA in Beijing. We will wait until the next MFA commissioner arrives in Macau and work the issue with him. Lu Shumin, 58, has been tapped to replace Wan. His most recent post was as ambassador to Canada, and he has spent much time in the Department of North American and Oceanian Affairs. In the meantime, we will continue to expand and solidify our warden network and work directly in Macau.

Cunningham